

Yachting World Going Solo blog

Web log entry dated 30 March 2009

[Underwater preparations for the OSTAR](#)

As the shed will only be out of the water for one month a top priority has been the preparation of the bottom for the forth coming race. As far as I am concerned this is the next most important preparation next to the sails and rig.

First I have removed all the old antifouling by wet sanding the bottom in long even strokes, following the contours of the hull so as not to rub flat spots. This has been done with first 80 and then 120 grit.

It is an enormous job totalling over 30 hrs of work and involving standing under the boat in all weathers, with hands over head, sanding.

I have been wearing an old spray top and wetsuit gloves to keep the worst of the water off. But after a while the blue residue from the antifouling which is reigning down on my head while I sand, works its way down my neck and arms, permeating through my layers to skin beneath.

At the end of the day, I am cold and wet with sore hands and blue underwear, but the hardships are worth it. I have taken the bottom back to a smooth mottled finish of the epoxy, paint, primer and old antifouling.

The next job was to apply two coats of antifouling. Again it is worth taking the time to do this. Using a roller and careful gentle strokes, the smoothest application now will save me hours of sanding later.

I am using Flag Finishes performance extra antifouling. I researched distance antifouling on the internet and came up with their product. I rang them and described what I wanted and we agreed that this antifouling was suitable as I would be able to sand it to a smooth finish after application. Flag finishes have also agreed to support my campaign by supplying me with antifouling for the race.

Today I start wet sanding again. I will sand off this application of antifouling to 400 grit and then paint over it again.

A final sand before my launch next week and then it will be time to go sailing and reap the benefits of my efforts.

Pip Hildesley

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